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Agenda item 14

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 2014

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/69/L.41 and Add.1)*]

69/140. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 68/126 of 18 December 2013 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and its other related resolutions,

Recalling also that in its resolution 67/104 the General Assembly proclaimed the period 2013–2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures,

Encouraging, in this regard, activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect and to create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

Recalling its resolution 64/14 of 10 November 2009 on the Alliance of Civilizations, in which it welcomed and expressed continuing support for the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations to promote greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures and religions,

Recalling also its resolution 68/127 of 18 December 2013 on a world against violence and violent extremism,

Recalling further its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, by which it declared 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and expressed its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

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Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Noting that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, as well as to the promotion of a culture of peace and an improvement of overall relations among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and among nations,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Recalling its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Bearing in mind that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities contributes towards peace, mutual understanding and friendship among people of different cultures and nations and that these diversities should be made part of intercultural and interreligious dialogue efforts, as appropriate,

Emphasizing the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and recognizing the importance of giving due consideration to culture in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, and in this regard noting the close links between cultural diversity, dialogue and development,

Noting the various initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, beliefs, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

Welcoming the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in promoting intercultural dialogue,

Welcoming also the declaration of the High-level Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue adopted by the Asia-Europe Meeting, with the theme "Harmony between civilizations as a prerequisite for sustainable development", held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 3 and 4 July 2014,

Welcoming further the work of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the ongoing work of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna,

Taking note of the initiative for education for peace through interreligious and intercultural dialogue in Africa, and the offer of the Government of Benin to host an international symposium on the initiative in Cotonou, Benin, during the first half of 2015,

Acknowledging the positive contribution of individuals and of relevant civil society organizations to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and the culture of peace,

Recognizing the contributions of the media and of new information and communications technology to promoting peoples' understanding of different cultures and religions, including through the promotion of dialogue,

Reaffirming the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders, including young men and women as relevant actors, in interreligious and intercultural dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at various levels, which aims to challenge prejudices and improve mutual understanding,

Recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace and the need for voices of moderation from all religions and beliefs to work together in order to build a more secure and peaceful world,

1. *Reaffirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious and intercultural dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;[2]

3. *Recognizes* the importance of interreligious dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and calls upon Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to give due consideration to culture in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda;

4. *Also recognizes* the efforts by relevant stakeholders to foster peaceful and harmonious coexistence within societies by promoting respect for religious and cultural diversity, including by engendering sustained and robust interaction among various segments of society;

5. *Further recognizes* the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on intercultural dialogue and its contribution to interreligious dialogue, as well as its activities related to the culture of peace and non-violence and its focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels;

6. *Welcomes* the adoption of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022),[3] by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, which provides a framework to enhance interreligious and intercultural dialogue and to promote tolerance and mutual understanding, while placing emphasis on the involvement of women and youth in such dialogue;

7. *Encourages* Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to carry out activities in support of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022);

8. *Condemns* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means;

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[2] A/69/413.

[3] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Executive Board decision 194 EX/10.

9. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

10. *Welcomes* the Bali Declaration adopted at the Sixth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, with the theme "Unity in diversity: celebrating diversity for common and shared values", held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29 and 30 August 2014, encourages relevant stakeholders to continue their efforts to promote mutual understanding among different civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs, and in this regard looks forward to the next meeting of the Global Forum, in Azerbaijan in 2016;

11. *Underlines* the importance of moderation as a value within societies for countering extremism in all its aspects and for further contributing to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, and encourages efforts, as appropriate, to enable voices of moderation to be heard;

12. *Welcomes* the efforts by the media to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, encourages the further promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but that these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;

13. *Also welcomes* the efforts to use information and communications technology, including the Internet, to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including through the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal established following the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010, as well as the Peace and Dialogue e-Portal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and encourages relevant stakeholders to utilize the opportunity to disseminate their best practices and experiences on interreligious and intercultural dialogue by contributing to the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal and to the Peace and Dialogue e-Portal;

14. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held in New York in October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions, as well as the ideas suggested during the third High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, held in Paris in November 2012;

15. *Acknowledges* the active engagement of the United Nations system with faith-based organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in bringing together people of different cultures, religions, faiths or beliefs to discuss common issues and objectives;

16. *Also acknowledges* the important role of civil society, including academia and volunteer groups, in fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and encourages support for practical measures that mobilize civil society, including building capacities, opportunities and frameworks for cooperation;

17. *Invites* Member States to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including by working with faith leaders and communities and through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals;

18. *Recognizes* that the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat plays a valuable role as focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, and encourages it to continue to interact and coordinate with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

72nd plenary meeting
15 December 2014